

*The  
Ritz-Carltons*

*by  
Fillmore Hyde*

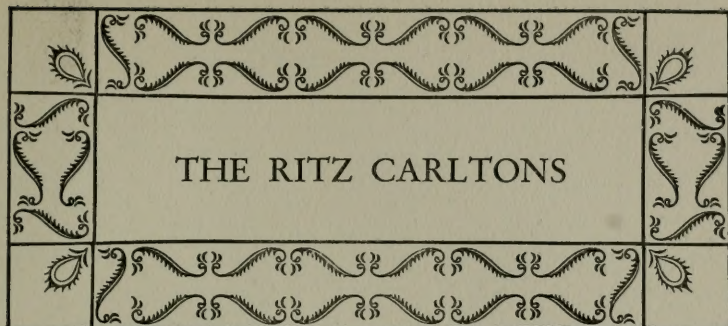




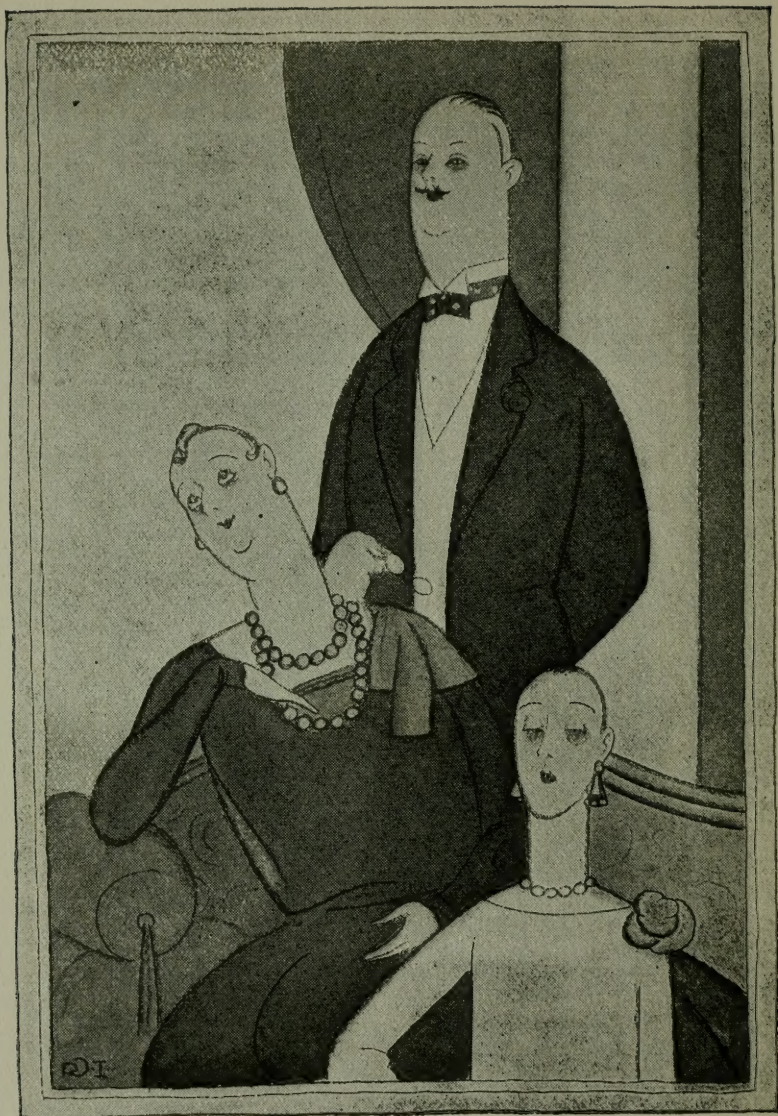








THE RITZ CARLTONS



# THE RITZ CARLTONS

BY  
FILLMORE HYDE

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DEDICATED  
TO  
MR. AND MRS. RITZ CARLTON  
AND TO THEIR DAUGHTER  
RITZA



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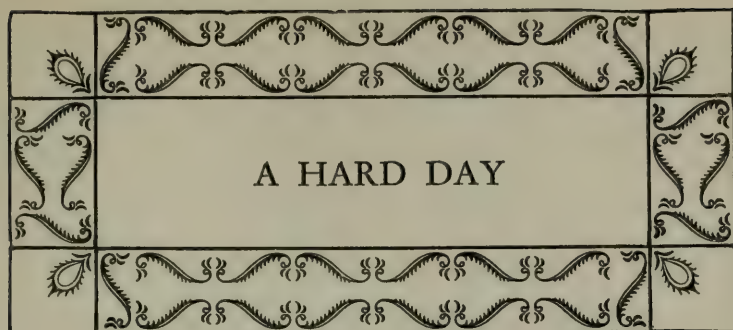
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T
 HIS day the sun rose in the east, flooding with the usual lambency the show places of Southampton, on which the whole world, blinded and unthinking, looks with foolish envy. For it is difficult for those who struggle along in ordinary-sized country homes to realize that on the bigger and more gorgeous estates sorrow also stalks. But it is true. Trial and tribulation visit Roach and Rockefeller alike. Even the richest of us bears His cross.

## THE RITZ CARLTONS

The series of misfortunes that was to mark this day began at an early hour. It was the day of Mrs. Touraine's dinner and dance. Mrs. Carlton, having sprained her thumb playing bridge the previous afternoon, had slept badly, or at least, not perfectly, and had awakened before nine-thirty in the morning. For a few moments she lay quietly, wondering with wide-open eyes if her early awakening meant that she was getting insomnia, and letting her plump hand stray over the pearls about her neck. If it should be hot that day she knew it would kill her.

As if the hand of Fate guided her finger, she touched a small bit of frayed silk rope and grew rigid. Although she was determined that on this day, if never again, she would not let the burdens of her life weary her so that she would have lines in her face for the Touraines' party, this unexpected catastrophe, coming practically at dawn, seemed more than she could bear. The thread on which her pearls were strung was fraying, which meant—but no one who has not owned pearls can realize what it meant. It meant that she would

## A HARD DAY

have to bother to tell her secretary to telephone her jeweler to send a man down from New York to restring them at once; it meant that she would be forced to be uncertain all morning whether the man would arrive in time to fix them before the Touraine affair, and that in the afternoon, if he did arrive, she would be deprived of her jewels for fifteen minutes while he was restringing them. Tears were perilously near, but she forced them back.

After breakfast, she struggled out of bed and allowed herself to be dressed and went downstairs to the west terrace for a moment's rest, passing the housekeeper on the way. "Thank Heaven there are servants in the house," she thought.

"Two of the footmen are leaving, madam," said the housekeeper.

Mrs. Carlton blanched.

"Of course they will be replaced at once," said the housekeeper, hastily.

On the porch was a book with which she had been amusing herself the previous afternoon—



which she had actually finished. Wearily she rang the bell. "This book ought to have been put back in the book case," she said to the maid.

Mr. Carlton appeared, dressed for golf. "Ritz!" she exclaimed apprehensively, her nerves shaken. "I thought you had left for the Club long ago. You won't hardly have time to get around. We have a luncheon at half-past one, you know."

"I'm not going. My foot hurts. Somebody stepped on me at the dance last night."

She turned away from him hopelessly—another thing wrong. "Where is Ritza?"

"She's gone down to the beach, I think."

Mrs. Carlton caught her breath quickly. "But why did you let her go? You *knew* I wanted to talk over with her what she was going to wear to the Touraines' to-night."

"She's coming back for lunch."

"But we're going out to lunch!" she said desperately. "You *knew* that. And this afternoon there's a man coming from New York to string my pearls. I suppose she took the Rolls."

He nodded. "Maybe she didn't know you wanted it."

Mrs. Carlton sank into a chair and pulled a handkerchief from her bag. "But she might have known I *might* have wanted it," she sobbed. "Since the moment I woke up this morning, everything has gone wrong in this house. I shall be a wreck by evening—and I *did* so want to look well at Mrs. Touraine's. I shan't go at all, probably." There was no mistaking the earnestness and reality of the sorrow that shook her chubby shoulders. In this moment life seemed a miserable shadow of what it might have been.

It so happened that the man who usually restrung Mrs. Carlton's necklace when it became frayed was away on his vacation. The secretary, when she learned of this unfortunate circumstance over the telephone, shuddered, and put her hands over her eyes. "Had I better tell her now," she said to the housekeeper, "or wait until the man arrives?"

"Tell her," said the housekeeper grimly, "There is no good in putting it off."

## THE RITZ CARLTONS

"You know she's never had any one but this one man to do her pearls. I can't imagine how they ever let him go on a vacation just now."

"Nor I." said the housekeeper.

Mrs. Carlton took the same point of view. Her mouth fell open with incredulity and she looked about her like a hunted animal as if she expected to see Fate stalking her from behind. "What kind of a man do you suppose they'll send?" she wailed. "Where did he go on his vacation? If he's near here I could send François over with the Hispano and have them back for dinner."

"I gave François the day off." said Mr. Carlton. "His wife's having a baby."

For a moment she looked at him stupefied. "Then who's to drive us to the Touraines' tonight? We can't have the second chauffeur—his uniform doesn't fit."

"My God! Doesn't it?" said Ritz, the panic spreading to him.

"Ring up the best uniform tailor in Southampton," said Mrs. Carlton wildly to the secretary,



## A HARD DAY

"and have him come here at once." Pale as a sheet, she tottered to a near-by divan and stretched her length upon it.

Lunch that day was but a sorry travesty of social ease. The luncheon date was called off on account of Mrs. Carlton's indisposition, and Ritza at the last moment telephoned that she would not come home; so that Ritz ate alone in the dining hall. Mrs. Carlton lay upstairs in the day bedroom with the shades pulled down, a handkerchief over her eyes. A bit of broth passed her lips—nothing more.

One would think that the sequence of catastrophes which had turned that summer's morning into a thing of horror must have run its course by the time the sun began westering down the afternoon sky. The soul of the woman at whom, it seemed, the malicious gods were tilting lay crushed, her body prostrate; and yet there was more to come.

In the middle of the afternoon there was the crackle of wheels on the bluestone driveway, and Ritza returned in the Rolls. Her eyelids were

## THE RITZ CARLTONS

suspiciously red, and she carried her face thrown back, as brave men do when they have received some sudden cruel blow. Without a word to the footman who opened the door for her, she went upstairs to her room. Presently she came into the hall and said to a passing chambermaid, "Where is mother?"

Learning the condition of affairs, she went silently into the sick room and, kneeling down by the bed, burst into tears. Mrs. Carlton half raised herself.

"What is it, Ritza?" she whispered fearfully, her lips going white, "What is it?"

"You know Nina Plaza's new bathing suit?" said Ritza, straightening up and dabbing her eyes.

"I knew she was getting one." said Mrs. Carlton, "But what is it, child, tell me."

"It's just like mine. The same striped skirt and everything."

With a cry the poor woman fell back on the pillow.

"Didn't Madame Poilu swear she wouldn't

make another like it?" said Ritza, searching her mother's face pathetically, "Didn't she—"

Mrs. Carlton nodded silently, slow tears trickling down her cheeks.

There was no question after that of going to the Touraines'. Within half an hour the doctor came, and the day which had dawned so brightly came to its twilight sadly. "Women do not know how to save themselves as we do." the doctor said huskily to Ritz as they left the sick room, "They have no bulwarks against life. A little stimulant will make her feel better. All she is, is tired—beaten down."

Ritz and Ritza, however, went to the Touraines' and had a very good time, although, as it turned out, the uniform of the second chauffeur was not got perfectly in order. They were happy that evening, but the Fates had one more blow in store for Mrs. Carlton—perhaps the deepest wound of all, for it was given by the hand of her own husband.

That evening, when he was ready to go to the dinner, she called him into her room and said,

## THE RITZ CARLTONS

"Of course I can't pretend to be at the dinner, but don't tell them that I'm not at the dance. I don't want to be out of it. As soon as the music starts, find the society reporter and tell her that I'm in the ballroom somewhere and that I've got on my new white flame from Madame Poilu's and my pearls and sunburst. Promise me, Ritz."


And he forgot,



MR. CARLTON CRASHES  
THROUGH





 ALMOST every man at some time or other feels civilization hemming him in, feels a desire to break away; but it is not generally known that this feeling occasionally invades even the circles of the upper class, where happiness reigns day and night.

After all, Ritz Carlton of the Carltons of New York and Southampton was a man. He had even been a father, as Ritza proved. He, too, rebelled. Perhaps, in spite of the money he had inherited, the clubs he belonged to, the harmless golf he played—in spite of all that he stood for, there was something primitive in him.

It is a serious thing when a man wakes up in the morning and decides that although it is a perfect day and although he has a golf engagement with a friend he will not play—that he will put on white flannels and his new white and brown tennis shoes instead. One morning, Ritz Carlton

did this. It was not merely that he got out the wrong side of the bed; it was a greater thing. He went into the shoe closet in his dressing room and glanced over the rows and rows of shoes arranged there. Among the tennis shoes he noted his all-white shoes, his white and black shoes, his old white and brown shoes, and his new white and brown shoes.

His face hardened. Grimly and silently, and then impetuously, he thrust his feet into a pair of not absolutely clean bedroom slippers and went down to breakfast.

An absolutely perfect cantaloupe and absolutely perfect toast, coffee, and oatmeal were placed before him; and yet he was not satisfied—in fact, the very perfection of the food seemed to fan the tiny flame that was rising in him. A stubborn ugly thought had lodged itself in his mind. Why should he do what he was told to do? What right had they to presume that he would not have preferred his cantaloupe a little green? Why must he always be sheltered?

Then came Ritza. She looked at his white

flannels a little suspiciously as she sat down, and after a moment said: "I thought you were playing golf, Dad. I'm using the tennis court this morning, you know; Sepia Biltmore is coming over."

"That's all right, dear." he said in a peculiar voice, "Just because I said I was going to play golf I don't have to, do I?"

He left the table as he spoke and went toward the door; and Ritza, her attention attracted by the odd intensity of his tone, looked after him, her mouth falling open at the sight of the bedroom slippers.

Mrs. Carlton was in the hall. "Good heavens, Ritz!" she exclaimed, wondering if her senses were deceiving her. "What on earth's come over you? Look at your feet! You must be losing your mind."

He stopped short and, stuffing his hands deep into his pockets, regarded his wife's chubby person coldly. In the distance the startled face of the secretary had appeared in a doorway. "Can't I put on bedroom slippers if I want to without

the house falling down?" he asked, half gritting his teeth.

"But you've got twenty pairs of shoes in your closet." she said, her hand going to her head unsteadily, "I asked the housekeeper to have the valet check them over only last week."

"But suppose I *want* to wear bedroom slippers!" he said, leaning toward her with terrible sweetness. "What then?" And he turned abruptly and went toward the living room, scuffling a little. Some magazines were carefully arranged in a row on the center table. He passed his hand along them, mussing them up, and continued out onto the terrace, closing the door a little less quietly than he might have.

After standing a moment as if petrified, Mrs. Carlton hurried nervously into the dining room. "Ritza! What can have happened to your father? Have you noticed him?"

"He's probably mad because Sepia and I are going to use the tennis court this morning." said Ritza reassuringly.

There the matter rested for the time being, and



a false sense of security settled over the household.

But Ritz smoldered out on the terrace ominously, his determination to assert himself strengthened by the opposition with which his every action had been received. He wandered morosely past the tennis court, the bowling green, the badminton and quoits courts to the croquet lawns and taking a half a dozen balls from the croquet house began viciously to hit them up and down. The click of the balls came faintly down the wind and into one of the morning rooms, where Mrs. Carlton was sitting.

"It's Dad practicing," said Ritza from the window.

"But he hates the game," said Mrs. Carlton.

Their eyes met and held for a long moment. Again there hovered the presence of a strange incomprehensible danger, and again it passed.

Toward eleven o'clock a footman brought a message to Mrs. Carlton that Mr. Park Lane had telephoned to find out if Mr. Carlton were going to play golf with him as per arrangement.

"Where is Mr. Carlton?" she asked.

## THE RITZ CARLTONS

"He cannot be found, madam," said the footman, "and the head chauffeur tells me he has not gone out."

"Have they checked all the cars?"

"Yes, madam."

With a queer, cold feeling about her heart she went downstairs and, seeing one of the driveway rakers at the front of the house, went out and spoke to him. He had not seen Mr. Carlton, but Tim Mudget—

"Have him brought here!" said Mrs. Carlton.

Tim Mudget was dripping with perspiration and breathing painfully in gasps, his eyes staring with excitement. It seemed he had been raking the drive a mile or so from the house, and had suddenly looked up and seen Mr. Carlton pass by, walking. Almost paralyzed with fright, he had dropped his rake and run to the house.

"He was *walking*, you say?" said Mrs. Carlton in a queer dry voice.

"I saw him on his two feet with my two eyes, mum." Tim nervously twisted the hem of his raking smock.

## MR. CARLTON CRASHES THROUGH

Mrs. Carlton made a noise in her throat. "Have the chauffeurs get out the racing car." she said shrilly. "He hasn't walked for twenty years. Oh, dear! What can have happened?"

In a few moments the rattle of the exhaust told that the racing car had taken up the pursuit, and after twenty minutes Ritz Carlton again stood in the front hall of his palatial residence.

"Ritz!" cried Mrs. Carlton, flinging herself upon him. "Are you all right? Look at me!"

He pushed her away from him. "Of course, I'm all right. Can't I take a stroll if I want to?" Then, seeing her still distracted face, he changed his tone suddenly. "I'm sorry, dear, I worried you. I don't know what got into me. Forgive me."

In her agitation the poor woman failed to notice that his teeth were clenched as he spoke. "Oh, Ritz!" she sobbed, sinking on to a settee and dabbing her eyes with her handkerchief, "How could you! And Park Lane called up to find out why you didn't come to the club as you said you

## THE RITZ CARLTONS

would. You must call him up and apologize to him, Ritz."

"All right, dear, I will." he said obediently, going toward the east den. When he had closed the door after him, however, his sweetness vanished, and the grim lines reappeared around his mouth. "I won't." he said aloud, "Can't I break an engagement if I want to? I won't apologize, I won't."

Sepia Biltmore stayed for lunch, although Mrs. Carlton, after all that had happened, would have preferred it if the family could have eaten alone. Yet nothing frightful occurred. To all appearances Ritz was perfectly normal. He sat quietly while the others talked about this and that, occasionally breaking in with some remark about golf or the liquor question. And after the meal Mrs. Carlton went upstairs with a feeling of immense relief to take a badly needed rest.

Ritz Carlton, however, had not done all that he was going to do. At half-past three, after he had recruited his energies, he ordered a car and

without a word got in it. "To the beach," he said sharply.

Scarcely crediting his senses, the man drove off slowly and pulled up at some distance from the bathhouses.

"Go right up to the entrance," said Ritz; "and now, come back for me in an hour." he added, getting out.

As every one knows, Southampton bathes only in the morning; in the afternoon the maids and serving men from the great houses are allowed to gather on the beach while off duty and enjoy themselves. No well-born person has ever seen the afternoon sun on those bathhouses. So it is easy to understand what happened at Carlton House when the returning chauffeur made known Ritz's whereabouts.

All that had gone before was as nothing compared to this. Even Ritza blanched. She and Mrs. Carlton, the secretary, the housekeeper, and some of the maids gathered in an upper room and clung together in terror.



"Call the doctor!" said Mrs. Carlton, wringing her hands, "He has gone crazy. I should have known it this morning when he was knocking those croquet balls around."

All this while Ritz lay, floating on his back in the Atlantic Ocean. Within fifty feet of him a butler was swimming, but he did not mind. He was happy—he was at peace with the world. He had rebelled against the conventions that hemmed him in, and it seemed to him that he had vindicated his manhood. After a while, seeing a little crowd on the beach and recognizing the figures of the secretary and the housekeeper, he swam ashore. "You may tell Mrs. Carlton that I will be home shortly," he said with a smile, "Tell her I am all right now."

The doctor met him in the hall and, after quizzing him a little, spoke of strong coffee. "Perhaps you've been drinking too much of it lately."

"No," said Ritz, laying a friendly hand on his shoulder, "it isn't that, doctor. I can't explain now, but I'm all right. It is Mrs. Carlton we must think of. Go to her and get some strength

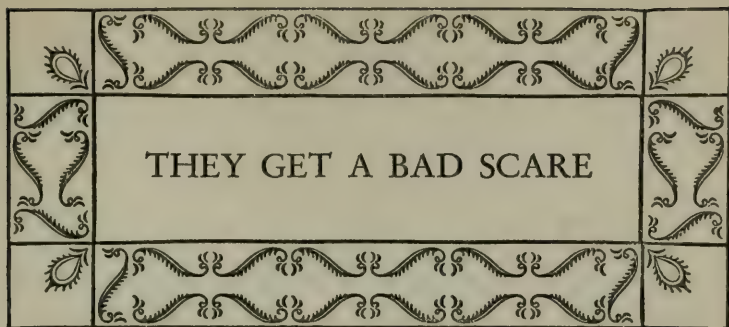


*"It is Mrs. Carlton we must think of.  
Go to her . . ."*

in her if you can. I will come when you want me."


After the doctor had left him, Ritz picked up a telephone. "Hello. Is Mr. Lane in? . . . Hello. Is this you, Park? Sorry I couldn't get to the club this morning. I called up to apologize. Forgive me, will you—and how about a game to-morrow?"

Then, learning that Mrs. Carlton wished to see him, he went obediently upstairs and tiptoed down the passage to where the doctor stood beckoning.







 IT is typical of the irony of things that problems follow one another in rapid succession in the lives of the socially elect. Theirs should be an ideal carefree existence; it is not always so.

The Ritz Carltons moved into town from Southampton to their house in the East Seventies on a Monday, and on the following Thursday, Mrs. Carlton took nourishment for the first time. On Wednesday, the secretary had informed her that the moving was about at an end. "The butler's room is still being decorated and fitted with new chintzes throughout, but everything else has been done, Madam. One of Miss Ritza's Ampico pianos has been put in her fourth floor sitting room as you suggested."

Mrs. Carlton had sighed gratefully, "What a blessing it is over!"

## THE RITZ CARLTONS

On Thursday afternoon her strength had so far returned that she asked the secretary to telephone Mr. Carlton at the Racquet Club that she was very anxious to see him.

The telephone brought to light, however, that Mr. Carlton was not at the Racquet; he had been there and had played a little mild billiards and then had left for some other club, no one knew which. The Knickerbocker, the University, the Players, were all tried in vain, and at last he was located at the Union; but the delay was very trying, and Mrs. Carlton brooded a little as she waited.

"I wish you would leave word which club you are going to be at, Ritz. It makes it *so* hard." she said as he came in and sat down.

"I meant to, dear," her husband returned self-reproachfully, "but Park Lane telephoned that they needed some one in a great hurry to fill one of the Fifth Avenue windows at the Union, and I rushed over immediately. I was sitting there when I got your message."

Mrs. Carlton rattled her pearls softly as she

hesitated. "It's about Ritza's fall plans. I've found out all about that class I spoke of—the one Mrs. Copley-Plaza was getting up for Nina. There are to be four girls besides Nina in it. Sepia Biltmore, Vivacia Park Lane, Pluria Touraine, and Iñaña Crillon. And they've hired Mrs. Besunt, the intellectual, to come twice a week."

"That seems all right," said Ritz, "Why not have Ritza join?"

"Because," said Mrs. Carlton with a gesture of vexation, "Mrs. Besunt says the class is too large as it is and that she couldn't possibly teach more than five. Some one has put her up to it, I suppose."

"But," began Ritz dazedly, "I don't understand. What does Ritza say?"

"She's miserable over it, of course." A slight wail crept into Mrs. Carlton's voice; and Mr. Carlton understood perfectly the reasons for it.

"Those are the people she ought to be going with," he said softly.

Mrs. Carlton moved her head affirmatively on the pillow. "Ritz," she said, and caught her

breath while, suddenly, tears came softly, "I've wondered if you've done anything you shouldn't lately—anything that could have given offense to somebody. Have you made fun of anybody or made light of anything? It would be too cruel if you had, after all I've tried to do for Ritza."

Mr. Carlton stood up rigidly; for the day that he had broken a golf engagement with Mr. Park Lane without calling up beforehand still burned in his memory. "I haven't!" he said passionately, "I swear I haven't. I've just played a little billiards and sat in the window at the clubs, sometimes by myself and sometimes with Park. That's all. I swear it, dear."

Sobs filled a short silence. Then Mrs. Carlton held out her hand to him gently. "I believe you, Ritz—I do, really. And now I wish you'd go and see if you can find anything out from Ritza. See if she remembers having given offense to anybody. We've got to know, Ritz. Think how it would look if—"

Mr. Carlton stood thoughtfully for a moment in the hall by the Master's elevator before pressing



*He found his daughter EN DESHABILLE, lying on her day bed with some Sealyhams. . . . "Can you think of ANYTHING, my child, that you have done that MIGHT have offended ANY ONE?"*



the little silver button. Seeing some maids, he sent them in to Mrs. Carlton. "She will probably require a fresh kerchief," he said, "Give her one if she wishes."

He was honestly a little frightened. Those girls were all to be *the* débutantes of that year—and if Ritza—!

He found his daughter *en déshabille*, lying on her day bed with some Sealyhams. "Ritza," he said earnestly, "your mother has told me about your not being in Mrs. Besunt's class. Can you think of *anything*, my child, that you have done that *might* have offended *any one*?"

"I've thought and thought, Dad," Ritza said, covering her eyes with her hands, "and I can't think of a single thing, unless—"

"Unless what?" cried her father, apprehensively.

The girl rose on her elbow and dabbled her eyes. "Well, you know Nina Plaza doesn't like me;" she said bitterly, "that's all—and she knows I don't like her. And last summer when she went and got that bathing suit just like mine—well—"

## THEY GET A BAD SCARE

"I remember." said Mr. Carlton tensely.

"Well—that day I was there for lunch. And Mrs. Plaza was talking about the class. And I was mad, anyway—and then I said what was the good of being so all-fired highbrow—that what we ought to study was Robert W. Chambers and Fletcher instead of highbrows."

Mr. Carlton was losing his bearings. "Instead of what, dear? I don't quite understand."

"Highbrows. Great Modernists—Michael Arlen and Sabatini. And that's what Mrs. Besunt is. But I didn't think Mrs. Plaza was offended. I really didn't." And Ritza buried her face in the pillow and sobbed.

It was easy to piece together the sorry story, and Mr. Carlton, after pointing out in a little lecture that all who hoped to make any kind of social success must school themselves never to say anything they think, left his daughter and returned to his wife.

"She made a bad break!" he cried; and then explained.

## THE RITZ CARLTONS

Mrs. Carlton gave an answering cry and fell back, white to the lips.

"Quick!" said Ritz to the nearby secretary, "Send for the doctor."

"Ritz!" said Mrs. Carlton faintly, "Tell Ritza to get dressed and go over to see Nina at once. Tell her to take over those Ampico rolls we had made specially for us and that Nina liked so. Tell her to admire her clothes and to invite her to sit in our box at the opening of the Opera. *We* can do nothing. *She* must do it. Make her understand."

Ten minutes later Ritza, fully dressed, left the house.

The leaden hours dragged away that afternoon. Ritz spent them in his checker-den, staring at the traffic. Four and five o'clock came and went. At least Mrs. Carlton had medical attention. At six, Ritza returned—she had done her best, but no one could foretell the outcome.

There was very little dinner that evening. Ritz had a turkey patty brought to him where he sat. Ritza swallowed a little whitebait.

Not until nine did a knock come at the check-

## THEY GET A BAD SCARE

er-den door. It was the butler. "Mrs. Plaza called on the telephone, Sir, to say that Mrs. Besunt had consented to take another pupil in her class for this fall; and that Mrs. Plaza would be pleased if Miss Carlton would care to join."

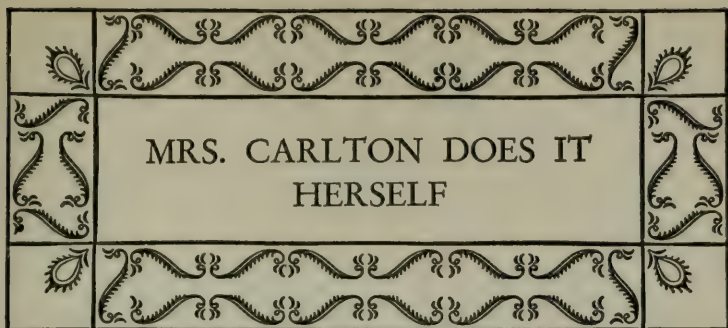
With a sigh of relief, Ritz rose from his vigil and went upstairs.

But he was stopped in the vestibule of Mrs. Carlton's room by the doctor, stern-faced.

"I am bringing good news," he said simply.

"Go in then," said the doctor softly.






MRS. CARLTON DOES IT  
HERSELF





NE cannot always explain one's motives, or always give a reason why one suddenly decides upon an extraordinary course of action. Rich as well as poor are liable to moments of impulse; so are the socially elect—so in this instance was Mrs. Ritz Carlton.

It is rare indeed that a woman of her wealth and position can wake up in the morning in a cheerful frame of mind, for the responsibilities of the well-to-do are very heavy. Yet, there came a morning when Mrs. Carlton awoke cheerfully. She remembered that she had given orders to have the breakfast room redecorated, and she said to the maid who came to close the windows and to lay out some bedroom slippers for her to choose from, "I think I would like to see the secretary."

Astonished at her pleasant tone of voice, the maid hurried away. When the secretary stood

before her, Mrs. Carlton smiled. "I have decided to do the redecorating of the breakfast room myself."

A while later, her husband entered to pay his morning call before leaving for his club. "But we have plenty of people here who can see that it's done properly without your bothering," he said when she told him of her determination.

"You don't realize, Ritz," she said, "how busy the upper servants are. And I have decided that I should try to do a little more myself. It is ridiculous to think that our life has become so complicated that I cannot find the time or strength to redecorate a breakfast room."

He kissed her fondly.

When Mrs. Carlton had been dressed, she hurried downstairs to the breakfast room, where, to her astonishment, she found some decorators, paper-hangers, rug experts, and antique dealers in conversation with the secretary. Her hand clenched.

"Did I not say that?—"

"Madam," said the secretary desperately, "it is



*Mrs. Carlton felt the whole thing was extremely inconvenient. "Have them go away," she said. . . .*

a misunderstanding. I had already arranged to have the work done, and it seems these men had left their shops when I telephoned to countermand the orders."

Mrs. Carlton felt the whole thing was extremely inconvenient. "Have them go away," she said, "and tell the chauffeur that I shall want the Minerva at once. You had better come with me—and have a list of stores ready."

Very soundly, Mrs. Carlton decided that the wall paper was the key to the decoration of a room and that it, therefore, should be chosen the first of all. She was predisposed to yellow, and chose twenty-five or thirty samples of paper of that color, ordering them sent that afternoon. The next thing was the curtains.

As they entered the car, however, and the secretary gave the address of an upholstery shop, Mrs. Carlton put her hand to her head. "I believe all those yellow papers have given me a headache. Did you bring my pills with you?"

"I didn't, madam."

"Then we must get some." said Mrs. Carlton

flatly. "Tell François to go to a drugstore." The secretary lifted the speaking tube and the car changed direction. Mrs. Carlton lay back and sighed. She felt as if all responsibilities of her large household were always hers, and as if no one ever helped her. Her lips tightened. "Never mind the drugstore," she said, "tell François to go to the Union Club."

They drew up before the distinguished-looking edifice, and after a few moments her husband appeared in the doorway. "Ritz," she said, "don't you think it would be fair if you helped me a little bit once in a while. I've looked at wall papers until I literally can't see. What are you doing?"

"I was just in the middle of a game of billiards with Park Lane, dear," said Mr. Carlton, "As I said, there are plenty of people—"

"But I want to do it myself," said Mrs. Carlton, as if for the hundredth time, "and I can't see why you won't help me." There was desperation in her voice.

Mr. Carlton returned to the billiard room, where his opponent was waiting. "Park," he said,



## THE RITZ CARLTONS

"Mrs. Carlton's outside, and she's perfectly desperate. We're redecorating up at our place, and she always likes to do that sort of thing herself. It's a killing job, you know; and I think I ought to help her a bit."

Mr. Park Lane smiled good naturedly, "It's all right, old man. I understand. I'll make out all right—I can always sit in the window, you know." Park was a brick.

A few moments later the Minerva was headed downtown. "It isn't as if you didn't have to use the breakfast room, too," said Mrs. Carlton as her husband took his place beside her.

"I know," Ritz said, "I suppose I've been kind of a rotter about it."

Mrs. Carlton smiled through her tears. "No, Ritz, but sometimes I feel that there's just no end to things."

They had a little trouble finding a man to show them curtains, and Mrs. Carlton stiffened. "I want chintzes for both curtains and furniture," she said coldly.

"Madam," said the secretary in a low voice,

MRS. CARLTON DOES IT HERSELF

"Miss Ritza said this morning that she particularly wanted those chairs covered with taffeta."

"Miss Ritza!" echoed Mrs. Carlton. "How could she have? Didn't you tell her that I—"

"That was earlier, madam. She went out before you were awake."

Mrs. Carlton looked at her apprehensively. "What color taffeta?"

"Red."

"Park says red's to be the color this season." put in Mr. Carlton.

"But it can't be red. I've chosen a yellow paper. Where is Miss Ritza?" said Mrs. Carlton in a shrill voice, her eyes fluttering with chagrin. "I don't see why she had to interfere. You had better telephone her to come down here."

"She's to have a lesson in clogging, madam."

"It doesn't matter." returned Mrs. Carlton, "Telephone her. Ritz," she continued, sinking into a chair, "I've never known anything to equal what I've gone through this morning. I started out to do a simple little thing like choosing the decorations for a room, and everything—abso-

lutely everything—has gone wrong.” And Mrs. Carlton drew out her handkerchief and bravely wiped her eyes.

It was fully three-quarters of an hour before Ritza arrived. She found Mr. Carlton standing by the store window looking into the street.

“What’s wrong?” she asked. “And where’s mother?”

“She’s lying down.” said her father. “Ritza, did you arrange to have red taffeta put in the breakfast room?”

Ritza put her hands on her hips. “Well, for Heaven’s sake! Is *that* what I’m telephoned for in the middle of a clogging lesson? Certainly I did. Sepia Biltmore’s having their breakfast room done in red—everybody is.”

“But your mother has chosen yellow paper.”

“Then just let her choose another color.”

“But she can’t, Ritza.” said Mr. Carlton, putting his hand on her shoulder. “She can’t, Ritza. She’s been tried enough. Let her have what she wants.”

"Shucks!" returned Ritza.

Together they went into the room where Mrs. Carlton had been put. "All right, mother, have it any color you want," said Ritza, "but the Biltmores and the Smith-Jones's are having theirs red. *I'm* having a clogging lesson."

"Why won't she help, Ritz?" said Mrs. Carlton when Ritza had gone.

"I think she's right, dear;" said Mr. Carlton gently, "I really think it ought to be red. Park says red is the color."

In silence they regained the car and returned to the wall paper store. "You haven't sent those samples yet, have you?" Ritz asked, "Because Mrs. Carlton has decided on red."

They had not, and some red samples were chosen. "My head is splitting, Ritz," Mrs. Carlton said.

"You're a little faint, dear; it's long past lunch time. A little food will make you feel all right."

But she shook her head. When they got home, though she would have eaten nothing, he forced her to taste a tiny sweetbread. "At least, we have

got the wall paper, dear." he said as they took her upstairs.

Ritz resumed his game of billiards with his friend, Park, that afternoon, but they had scarcely got started when he was called to the telephone. It was the secretary. "Mrs. Carlton has been asking to see the wall paper samples all afternoon, and they have just come"—Mr. Carlton could hear the fright in her voice—"And they've sent the wrong ones. The yellow ones."

He rushed downstairs and to the street.

"You mustn't show them to her!" he said as the secretary met him at the door of the house.

"She's in a frightful state, sir."

They went upstairs; and Ritz entered and found his wife half-sitting up in bed, her face livid. "Ritz," she said in a strangled voice, "thank God you're here. Tell them to bring those samples into this room this instant."

He stood irresolute for an instant, growing pale; and then his arms fell helplessly to his side.

"Take them in." he said to the secretary in the

MRS. CARLTON DOES IT HERSELF  
hall. "You've telephoned for the doctor?" She  
nodded.

An instant later Mrs. Carlton's shriek rang  
through the house and the doctor had brushed  
Ritz aside in the vestibule and was at her side.







MRS. CARLTON ERRS





FEW weeks before Christmas Mrs. Carlton did a foolish thing which most people would never believe a woman of her wealth and social position would do—she determined to economize.

One morning—it was the morning after one of Mrs. Plaza's dinner-dances—she said to the maids who were gathered about, arranging her breakfast tray, "I must see the secretary. Tell her to come at once."

When the secretary appeared, Mrs. Carlton let her head fall back on the pillow and took a spoonful of puffed wild rice. "I have decided I really oughtn't to spend so much money," she said.

The secretary looked at her in amazement. "You mean your new fur coat to go with the Hispano upholstery, madam? For I have paid the bill."

"I mean general household expenses—presents and Christmas decorations." returned Mrs. Carlton with a determined sigh, "At this time of year, if one isn't careful, one simply throws money away."

The secretary did not presume to question the truth of this generality. "Miss Ritza is taking charge of the decorations for the house this year." she said quietly.

"Then I'd like to see her." said Mrs. Carlton, "And by the way, if some of my eyeglasses are on the dresser, I wish you'd give me a pair."

When Ritza arrived her mother adjusted her glasses and took a pencil and some paper. "Ritza, how many rooms are there to be decorated, and how much money have you decided to spend?"

Ritza, who had been standing at the footboard in her negligée—a little garment of pink fur—came around and sat down on the foot of the bed, her mouth falling open suspiciously. "What's the big idea?" she asked, turning towards the secretary, who stood blankly by.

"Just what I say—" returned Mrs. Carlton in a

grieved voice, "how much do you think it will cost?"

"For the love of Pete!" ejaculated Ritza indignantly, "How should *I* know? I've ordered decorations for the whole ground floor, that's all, and told the men what I want."

"Don't you think your father's dens could do without decorations?"

Ritza was speechless. "Listen, mother," she said at last, taking a long breath, "*I'm* running these decorations, and they're going up in the dens and every place else. They'll be up until after the dance, on the third—and that's where the drinks and cigars will be. Don't be a ninny." She went over to the dressing-table and patted her hair for a moment. "I never heard such a dumb idea."

As her daughter flounced out, Mrs. Carlton's lip trembled. Try as she would, things always became overwhelmingly difficult. Wealth, indeed, brings never-ending worry. The puffed wild rice seemed dry in her mouth.

It so happened that Ritza passed her father in



the hall on her way back to her suite. Mr. Carlton, who was dressed for a day of sitting in his club, paused with a queer feeling, and looked after his daughter's retreating figure, to which indignation had lent a sinister vigor.

In Mrs. Carlton's room there was a moment's silence. "Telephone the decorators," said Mrs. Carlton, her lips set tightly, "and tell them to send only half of the things Miss Ritza ordered."

A highly sensitive person would have sensed a strange atmosphere in the huge house during the next few weeks, but Ritz was not one to do so, in spite of the peculiar feeling he had had on seeing Ritza in the hall. He loved Christmas, and he derived an innocent pleasure from dressing himself up more and more as the holiday approached. He sat for hours in the window of his club, watching the throngs, believing them as happy as he was himself.

"What about the Christmas list?" he said to his wife one day, "I'd rather like to buy a few of the presents myself this year. There are some stores right by the club."

"I'm cutting down the list," she replied, "we've just been *throwing* money away."

He looked at her without comprehending, and didn't press the point.

Two days afterwards, however, he had reason to recall the occasion and to read the true meaning into it. Christmas was only four days away. He was sitting, before noon, in his reading den, absorbed in some old bound copies of *Town Topics*, when Ritza entered abruptly and, slamming the door, put her back fiercely against it.

"Look here!" she said, pointing savagely at her father, "I ordered eight evening dresses last week, and when I come to look for them, I find mother has sent three of them back. What in hell is going on here?"

Mr. Carlton looked at his angry offspring helplessly.

"First she kicks about the decorations," continued Ritza with clenched fists, "then she says I mustn't give Iñaña Crillon a present unless I'm sure she's going to give me one, then she says I

don't need a jade-handled umbrella, and now she begins sending back evening dresses!"

Mr. Carlton endeavored to pull himself together. "But Ritza, are you sure about this?"

"Sure about it?" echoed Ritza scornfully, "What do you think I am, a dumbbell?" Mr. Carlton shook his head.

"All I know is I've *got* to have evening dresses." said Ritza heatedly, "There's a dance every night from now until the tenth of January; and if you think five dresses are enough you're crazy."

Left alone with this thought, Mr. Carlton sank his head in his hands and tried to analyze the situation. Something had evidently gone wrong.

He wisely determined to do nothing hastily. The lower part of the house was in confusion as he passed through it on his way upstairs. Ritza was in conference with some decorators and the floor was littered with holly-wreaths, paper bells, and ropes of evergreens.

"Well, my dear," he said cheerfully as he entered Mrs. Carlton's sitting room, "I bought Park Lane the grandest humidior to-day. He's only got

one of those little five thousand cigar ones, you know."

To his astonishment, Mrs. Carlton reached for a handkerchief and began to sob quietly.

"My dear!" he said, aghast, "What have I done?"

"Nothing," she sobbed, holding out her hand for him to help her to a couch, "nothing—only now, for two weeks, I have tried *so* hard not to throw money away the way we have been doing—and then you go and—" But sobs choked her.

"But Park is my best friend." explained Ritz earnestly, "I had to—"

"You have no idea the time I have had with Ritza." continued Mrs. Carlton wretchedly, "She has been just throwing money away; and when I tried to suggest to her she—"

Mr. Carlton dimly saw. "We must remember that this is Ritza's year. She will never be a *débutante* again." he said gently.

"You mean—" She looked at him wildly. "You mean I have done wrong?"

## THE RITZ CARLTONS

He put it as kindly as he could. "After all, we *have* money—our position warrants—"

Mrs. Carlton's face grew hunted. "No one ever pays any attention to me; I always do things wrong," she said shrilly; and the intensity of her tone was ominous. "My new car and fur coat were so expensive, I was only going to get you a trifle for Christmas this year. I thought—"

Ritz's face grew grave. At the same moment the sound of angry voices was wafted distantly from the lower hall. The secretary appeared in the doorway, ashen gray. But before she could utter a word of warning, Ritz had burst past her, eyes blazing with fury.

"Did you tell those Christmas decorators to bring only half of what I ordered?" she vociferated at her mother.

Before this fresh attack Mrs. Carlton collapsed with a wail. The secretary, without a word, turned and ran for the telephone.

Ritz stood up, horrified; he had not realized how bad it was. "How *could* you?" he said to his wife in a low voice.



*Before this fresh attack, Mrs. Carlton  
collapsed with a wail. . . .*



Mrs. Carlton's lips grew pale and she fell back. She still lay in this position when the doctor came.

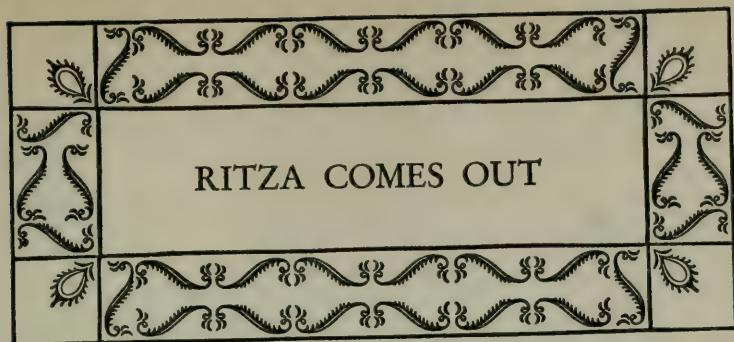
"Mr. Carlton," he said later, in the den, when all that could be done had been done, "I do not presume to ask what has happened; but there has been a shock—a grave shock. Women are not as we are. Could she not have been spared?"

Tears of contrition started in Ritz's eyes. "I know, doctor," he said, miserably.


"Have you, then, no word for her?"

Ritz nodded.

"Then go to her, my friend—she needs you."





 LTHOUGH the public may not realize it, the coming out of the daughter of wealthy and socially prominent people such as the Ritz Carltons is an affair not to be taken lightly. The amount of labor required is little short of overwhelming; orchestras must be hired, liquor must be bought, invitations must be sent out, and a thousand other jobs must be got through somehow. Coöperation is essential.

Yet Mr. Carlton, when he was told what day had been decided upon for the party, went down to his club instead of going upstairs to see his wife. He did so because he was excited.

Immediately he was telephoned to. It was the voice of his daughter, Ritza. "Don't you know we've got to talk over the arrangements?"

"All right," he said, hanging up, "I'll be home in a little while."

## THE RITZ CARLTONS

He found his friend, Park Lane, in the billiard room. "We've set the date for Ritza's coming out." he confided with a broad smile, "You know I was just thinking—I've had this coming out affair in the back of my mind ever since Ritza was born. It will be good fun, you know. But there's a devil of a lot of arranging to be done."

During the ensuing week his good humor increased. He willingly assumed all the responsibilities allotted to him, and told everybody not to worry.

Mrs. Carlton was alarmed by his attitude. "If only Mr. Carlton wouldn't stay at the club." she said to the secretary for the hundredth time.

"I have checked up on everything he has done, madam." replied the secretary, "He has arranged for special trains from New Haven, Cambridge, and Princeton. There are to be three orchestras playing in rotation. The boutonnieres have been ordered."

Mrs. Carlton sighed dubiously. "What about the detectives?"

## RITZA COMES OUT

"We are having English ones sent from Scotland Yard, madam."

But in spite of the secretary's reassurances, Mrs. Carlton was not easy in her mind. Nor was Ritza quite satisfied. "What on earth's the matter with Pa?" she asked sourly, "He's acting like a 'proud father' or something. The way he talks you would think *he* was giving the party."

Allowing for his wealth and social position, Mr. Carlton's actions were, indeed, not unlike those of a proud father. As the date for the dance drew nearer, he took to spending more and more time at his clubs, not only in the billiard rooms, domino rooms, and reading rooms, but also in the plain sitting rooms where most of the members gathered. "By the way," he would say affably, "my daughter is coming out next Friday. I suppose your wife has got your invitation."

To his friend, Park Lane, he stated frankly that he was going to have as good a time out of the affair as he could. "There being only one girl in our family, you know, it's about the only thing



of the kind we'll ever have. It makes the big house seem rather worth while."

"It certainly does." Park Lane agreed.

When at last the day dawned, Mrs. Carlton checked everything again for the last time. "The liquor, Ritz;" she said apprehensively, "are you sure the champagne is all magnums?"

"Of course, dear."

"But you seem so carefree about it." she said, nervously, motioning to him to hand her a fresh bottle of smelling salts, "Can't you see how terribly Ritza is worried? It's her only party."

"There's no sense in being gloomy about it, is there?" he asked mildly.

"No," said Mrs. Carlton, turning her head away helplessly, "but you can see how serious it would be if the dance were sticky, or if something went wrong with the invitations and some people didn't get invited—the Crillons, or the Biltmores, for instance."

Ritza was furious when she heard of this conversation. "What does he think coming out is, a joke?" she asked.

## RITZA COMES OUT

Mr. Carlton, however, remained stubbornly in good humor. After dinner, he and Ritza went over the final arrangements together. The champagne was to be in one den, the punch in another, and the whiskey and soda in a third. "And for Heaven's sake see that there's plenty," said Ritza, "and are there enough gold fish in the conservatory fountain?"

"Sure there are." he said.

There were not: and it was one of the things he had said he would attend to. "I know I ordered them." he reiterated.

Subsequently a tank of fish was discovered in the cellar and the oversight was remedied. "It's just too selfish of him;" Mrs. Carlton said tearfully when the miscarriage was reported, "I'll never ask him to do another thing."

Dinner was eaten upstairs. Mrs. Carlton got out of bed about ten o'clock, the guests began arriving shortly after eleven, and the special trains from the college towns got in at midnight; by one A.M. the party was in full swing.

Ritz continued to enjoy himself hugely as the

three orchestras played in perfect rotation. He stood in the receiving line next to his wife for a while and then wandered off and danced with little Iñaña Crillon. No sooner had he embarked on the floor than Ritza brought a young man up and introduced him to Iñaña, thus liberating Ritz.

"Go back and stand by mother." she hissed at him.

He returned obediently to his post, but presently slipped away into the hall, where Park Lane and Mr. Biltmore were standing talking.

He had only just gone when somebody tripped over the wire in the conservatory, putting out all the colored lights which had been strung among the palms. Ritza reported the occurrence to headquarters over the shoulder of her partner, and whirled away again. "I think the wire's busted." she said with cold, significant eyes.

Mrs. Carlton had expected it; and she knew, even before she turned to where Mr. Carlton ought to have been standing, that he would not be there. She had had a premonition that these



*. . . And then wandered off and  
danced with little Iñaña Crillon.*

things would happen. Yet she stood serene, smiling sweetly, listening with every show of interest to Mr. Plaza's account of what the doctor was doing for his liver. Those who exist outside the inner circle of Society will, perhaps, never appreciate the iron self-control which generations and generations of breeding and position at length cultivate in a woman like Mrs. Carlton. The thoughtless world knows and honors only the heroes of war; the heroes of Society are unsung.

Mrs. Carlton was a highly sensitive woman. Had she been standing alone among her servants she would undoubtedly have wilted under the strain; but she was not alone, she was a hostess in her own house, surrounded by her peers, the cynosure of all eyes.

One person, however, saw through the hostess's mask, and that person was the secretary. She was standing at her post by the stairs with the society reporters, telling them what jewels the guests were wearing, what the important dresses were like, what the supper menu would be, how big the ballroom was, and all the rest of the things

## RITZA COMES OUT

that, in spite of all that Society can do, the papers manage to get hold of.

As unnoticed as possible she went to her mistress. "Madam?" she asked. As she spoke, there came a distant, soft crash of glass.

Mrs. Carlton, in spite of everything, winced infinitesimally. "Mr. Carlton—" she murmured swiftly, "find him—the conservatory lights—and that crash!"

Ritza whirled past. "The orchestras need drinks." she said, her eyes fixed meaningfully on her mother.

The secretary vanished. Her face was grave, for she had long since learned to distinguish between the approach of real calamity and the advent of the minor aggravations of social life. "Where is Mr. Carlton?" she asked a butler who was passing with a small wagon of magnums, "You had better look through the dens for him. And get the electricians."

Mr. Carlton was not in the dens.

"The Fourth Den?" asked the secretary despairingly.



## THE RITZ CARLTONS

"The gentlemen's coats are in it."

There was not time for further search. "What was the crash of glass?" asked Mrs. Carlton when the secretary returned to the ballroom.

"A standing lamp, madam; it has been removed."

"And Mr. Carlton?"

The secretary shook her head hopelessly.

"For the love of Heaven, where's father?" asked Ritza, leaving her partner for a moment, "Somebody's got to do something. It's getting close in here. Reggie Brevoort has passed out in the coffee room. There are no cigarettes in the library."

In the meanwhile, the Fourth Den contained more than the gentlemen's coats; it contained Mr. Biltmore, Mr. Park Lane, and Mr. Carlton. They had a bottle of Scotch with them. In a rare good humor, Ritz was showing his friends some new special cigars he had recently had made for him in Cuba.

"I'll give you a thousand of them, Park—" he said.

## RITZA COMES OUT

"By Jove!" exclaimed Mr. Lane, "that's bully of you."

The three of them turned up at supper at three o'clock, and Ritz ensconced himself by pretty Mrs. Astoria. "Is Waldorf back from Europe yet?" he asked.

"Oh, dear, no," she returned, laughing, "Wally loves Europe, you know."

In the hall, the secretary sat with her head in her hands; there was no megaphone to call the motors with—it was one of the things Mr. Carlton was to have attended to.

In this fashion four o'clock came and went. By five, the floor was thinning out. At last the coffee-room was empty and the last coat had been removed from the den, and Mr. Carlton with his own hand closed the door. The purr of Hispano-Suizas died away.

"Ritz!" came the strangled voice of Mrs. Carlton from the ballroom.

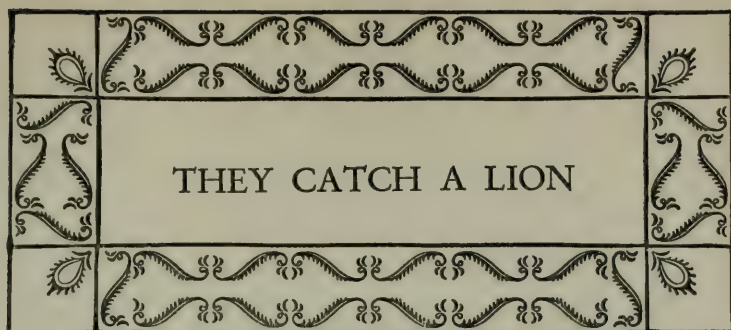
Ritz leisurely crossed the hall. "How many people do you suppose," he began, and then saw that Mrs. Carlton, in her pearls and stomacher,

lay insensible on a row of gilt chairs. "Quick!" he cried—but the secretary was already at the telephone.

A few minutes later the doctor was tearing off his coat. "I see you've been entertaining," he said grimly.


"Yes," said Ritz smiling, "Ritza's coming out, you know."

But the doctor strode towards the ballroom without replying, and the next instant the science of medicine had come to Mrs. Carlton's aid.



THEY CATCH A LION



HEN Ritza returned from Tuxedo and Mr. and Mrs. Carlton got back from Lake Placid where Mrs. Carlton was perfectly certain she had frozen her feet, several days of comparative quiet followed at the Carltons' home. Ordinarily they would have gone to Florida, but Mrs. Carlton couldn't face the trip; the season had been too strenuous.

Numbers of odd jobs were done. The closets throughout the house were lined with fresh cedar, all the pictures on the ground floor were re-framed, and the pianos were all tuned.

It happened at this time that they met an English playwright called Bovril, several of whose plays were on Broadway, and discovered that he was staying with the Biltmores. Ritza went to a little talk he gave on "The Sponge in Literature" and Mrs. Biltmore described him as "ever



so interesting." That same evening Mrs. Carlton talked to her husband.

"The Hyde Parks are over from London, by the way, and they say Mark Tadpole, the novelist, is landing next week. I think it would be nice to have him stay with us. The Biltmores—"

"But we don't know him." Ritz objected.

Mrs. Carlton strove to be patient. "The Hyde Parks know him well enough, my dear. They put him up in Devonshire several times."

The long and the short of it was that five days later Mr. Mark Tadpole, author of "Twenty-four Pies and a Blackbird," took possession of a suite on the third floor of the Carltons' residence. He immediately began using the automatic elevator, invariably forgetting to close the door after him when he had finished with it, with the result that nobody else could make use of it.

Ritza was apprised of his arrival by finding that she had to walk upstairs when she came in before dinner. "Oh, my God!" she remarked.

Mrs. Carlton sent for her. "Ritza," she said

## THEY CATCH A LION

earnestly, "Mark Tadpole, the celebrated novelist, is in the house, and I want you to be pleasant to him. It's very nice of him to stay with us."

"What does he look like?" asked Ritza non-committally.

"He's a gentleman," replied Mrs. Carlton with emphasis, "well-dressed, with beautiful manners and a charming voice."

"How old is he?"

"I should say he was about forty-five."

Ritza picked up her mother's buffer and began to polish her nails briskly. "Certainly, I'll be pleasant to him—somebody's got to tell him to shut the door of the elevator after him. I had to walk up."

Mr. Carlton upon his return home was also apprised by direct evidence that the house was being honored with a celebrated guest. Going into the den, he rang the bell and demanded to know the whereabouts of the evening papers, which were not in their accustomed place.

"Mr. Tadpole, sir, requested that they be brought up to his room." said the footman.

"But there are five evening papers." protested Ritz.

"He wished them all, sir."

Somewhat confused, Ritz went upstairs to consult his wife. "There's not a single paper downstairs," he said a trifle warmly, "Tadpole had them all sent up to his room. What do you suppose he did that for?"

Mrs. Carlton didn't know. "But let him do what he wants to, Ritz;" she said pleadingly, "it's very nice of him to stay with us, remember."

At this, Ritza, who was still polishing her nails, gave a snort.

"I'm not going to keep him from doing what he wants to," said Mr. Carlton after glancing suspiciously at his daughter, "but I think he might have left me one paper."

There was to be a small dinner of sixteen at eight—just a few intimates of Mrs. Carlton's, to whom Mr. Tadpole was to appear and be introduced. He was scheduled to lecture somewhere later. When Mrs. Carlton came to ordering the

## THEY CATCH A LION

car for him, she was disconcerted to find that he had already ordered it.

As they stood around waiting for Tadpole before dinner, Ritz remarked good-naturedly to Mrs. Majestic that novelists were always more or less eccentric. "Took all my evening papers, you know."

"Mother says I've got to read one of his books." Ritza was saying across the room.

At half-past eight the butler entered and whispered to Mrs. Carlton that Mr. Tadpole felt that he had better have his dinner in his room. She swayed slightly at the news, and her cheeks paled, but she continued to chat affably. Presently she suggested that it might be well not to wait any longer for Mr. Tadpole. "He always hesitates about eating too much," she said, "particularly when he is lecturing."

The next day Ritza called on her father in the morning den. "That fellow Tadpole must think we're a hotel;" she confided sourly, "I haven't seen him since he's been here."

## THE RITZ CARLTONS

"You must make allowances, Ritza," her father said soothingly.

"I'm not going to bawl him out or anything," Ritza assured him, "but from now on I'm not going to keep any engagements on his account. If something better turns up that I want to do, I'm going to do it."

After sitting and digesting this statement for some time, Ritz, instead of going to his club, went and spoke seriously to Mrs. Carlton. Mrs. Carlton dabbed her eyes furiously. "Of course, we can't say anything to anybody," she said bitterly, "but I was terribly mortified last night at Mr. Tadpole's thoughtlessness."

"It was very disappointing of him." Ritz agreed, "What ought we to do? Ritza says—"

"Do?" echoed Mrs. Carlton despairingly, "There's a dinner of thirty-two to-night, one of sixty-four to-morrow night, and one of one hundred and twenty-eight on Friday. I don't know what we *can* do."

Ritz's hands clenched as he looked at his wife's grief-stricken face. Things were very cruel.



*Mr. Tadpole finally appeared at tea  
and permitted his host to have a good  
look at him.*



Mr. Tadpole finally appeared at tea and permitted his host to have a good look at him. Mrs. Carlton came downstairs especially to see him. Ritza poured tea, her mother not feeling up to it, and examined the famous novelist closely. "Mother says I ought to read one of your books," she said, handing him a piece of imported chocolate cake.

"Cruel parent!" he replied, smiling.

"Why, Ritza!" exclaimed Mrs. Carlton, saying not quite the right thing, "I never said anything of the . . ."

It was altogether very, very charming—Mrs. Carlton could hear herself telling Mrs. Plaza how just like a book it was. "When do you lecture again?" she asked, exclaiming how interesting it must be to hear him talk.

"To-night, I'm afraid," he said ruefully, "It's rather beastly."

"But I say—there's to be a . . ." Ritz began, subsiding at a look from his wife.

"We were just having a few dozen people in

## THEY CATCH A LION

to meet you;" she said, hastily swallowing some tea, "they'll be frightfully disappointed."

He perished the thought with a gesture. "You exaggerate," he murmured, "and to-morrow I fear I must go to Schenectady."

This was a really serious blow.

"But I'll be back," he added. Soon afterwards he excused himself to prepare some notes.

"Well, I'm damned!" said Ritza after a short silence, "If I were you, when he goes to Schenectady, I'd make him take a taxi to the station."

Mrs. Carlton's shoulders were shaking with disappointment.

The following noon the secretary called Mr. Carlton on the telephone at his club. "Mrs. Carlton is becoming worried sick over things, sir," she said.

"She seemed all right this morning," said Ritz in dismay.

"But she's been thinking things over, sir," said the secretary.

Ritz consequently lunched at home.

The dreadful presence of Tadpole in the house

had brought the members of the family closer together than they had been for some time. "Thank the Lord he's gone to Schenectady;" said Ritza, "do you know what he did this morning? He asked me not to play the Ampico in my room, as it disturbed him when he was working."

"I hope you didn't worry your mother by telling her." Ritz said apprehensively.

In the afternoon Mrs. Carlton was persuaded that a little spin in the air would do her good. Ritz pointed out that she had never driven in the new Isotta since she had had it. She rose unsteadily and went down to the door, to find the Rolls and the second chauffeur at the door.

"Mrs. Carlton wished the Isotta." said Ritz severely.

After saluting, the footman explained that the Isotta was not in the garage. "Mr. Tadpole took it to Schenectady, sir."

There came a low cry from Mrs. Carlton as Ritz stood helplessly on the doorsill with clenched fists. "I will never be well enough for dinner to-

## THEY CATCH A LION

night." she said when they had got her back to bed.

The secretary was busy that afternoon calling up the sixty-four guests who were to have come that evening and asking them if they could come the following evening instead. Many accepted, which, together with the hundred and twenty-eight who were already invited for that night, made well over a hundred and eighty souls.

Although so numerous a party was not too large for the Carlton house dining room, a general feeling of uneasiness pervaded the household. It could not help being an important occasion, and Mrs. Carlton was not rallying as she should. Ritz was so perturbed that he barely went to the club.

Ritza took the occasion to go through Tadpole's suite and examine his belongings. "He's got some of your new special cigars up there, Pa, and some of your monogrammed razor blades."

Late in the afternoon a gloomy drizzle set in, covering the window panes with heavy moisture. Mrs. Carlton lay listlessly on her pillows, her eyes fixed sadly on the lugubrious scene, while Ritz

## THE RITZ CARLTONS

kept her company in an easy chair. The Isotta returned shortly after sunset, and a note was brought upstairs to the bedroom.

Although he did not know why, Ritz's heart sank as he took it. "Shall I open it, dear?"

It was in Mr. Tadpole's beautiful English. He appreciated Mrs. Carlton's hospitality immeasurably—he found, however, that he could continue his lecture tour indefinitely—therefore, would they please pack his bag and send it to him—he was deeply grateful.

Ritz crumpled the paper spasmodically in his hand; and at the sound, Mrs. Carlton raised her head sharply. "Ritz!"

The agony in her voice told him that she had surmised. He bowed his head. "He is not coming back." In the hall could be heard the footsteps of the secretary as she ran desperately to telephone the doctor.

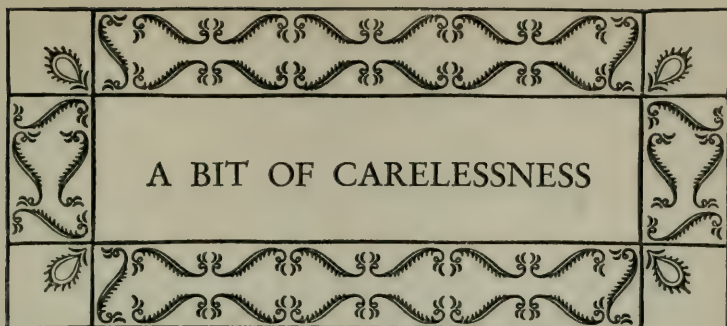
After medical skill had done its all, the doctor came to Ritz. "Your wife has been hurt," he said. "Why is it that I cannot learn what made the wound!"

## THEY CATCH A LION

He was never told—indeed, no one was ever told. At the dinner, which Ritz carried off unaided, he spoke well of Mark Tadpole when questioned, always replying that the famous novelist was most charming and *so* interesting.








A BIT OF CARELESSNESS



HE memory of the lamentable visit of Mr. Mark Tadpole, famous English novelist, had faded in the minds of Mr. and Mrs. Ritz Carlton and their daughter, Ritza. There had been warm days. Spring had penetrated into practically every room in the Carltons' house. It was a gay time; the Hyde Parks had urged the family to visit them in Washington.

One evening the Carltons dined alone—and that evening they were unusually happy. "Ritza," said Mrs. Carlton, choosing her time, for she did not like to reprove her daughter when there were more than two footmen in the room, "I wish you would let me know a little more of what you are doing about your spring clothes."

Ritza stared. "What's the big idea?" she asked.

"Surely your mother has a right to know." said

Ritz, as he allowed a butler to serve him a second Persian lamb chop.

They chatted on in a vague fashion. Mr. Carlton's mind was occupied with a pleasant thing he had recently done: that very afternoon he had bought a kennel of dogs with a view to having some puppies specially bred for Ritza's birthday in the fall. "By the way," he had said to his friend, Park Lane, at the club, "I've bought a kennel of dogs. Ritza's birthday is in September, you know."

"By Jove!" Park Lane had exclaimed. "A good idea."

Mrs. Carlton, however, returned to the subject of spring clothes when she visited her husband in a den after the meal was over. "You will find time this week to go with Ritza and me to see some of the new models, won't you, Ritz?" she asked.

"I'll find time somehow," he said.

The next day, while he was sitting in one of his clubs, a couple of attendants came and opened the

## A BIT OF CARELESSNESS

window above him an inch or so, for the club was a few degrees warmer than it ought to have been.

That night, as he was going in to dinner at the Biltmores', he spoke to Mrs. Bossert Roof of Brooklyn, who was on his arm, of the charming weather they had been having. "And yet, you know," he said, "oddly enough, I feel as if I might have a stiff neck."

"Naughty boy!" she said archly, "*Il faut prendre garde.*"

He laughed.

"Spring is so drafty." she warned him.

During the rest of the evening he thought no more about it, but on the way home he put his hand to his throat several times. "Do you know," he said to his wife when they stood in their hall, handing their wraps to the footmen, "I believe I've got a stiff neck."

"Where could you have got it?" she asked wearily, for she was very tired. Ritz racked his brains. "I'm sure I don't know. I've noticed the Rolls-Royce has been drafty lately, and I've been



meaning to tell François to have it all gone over by a window expert."

There was no doubt about the stiff neck the next morning. Waking up soon after ten, he was attacked by an agonizing pain when he tried to turn his head to watch the valet close the windows.

The man turned as Ritz uttered an ejaculation. "Mrs. Carlton's maid, sir," he said respectfully, "wishes me to say that her mistress has made appointments for Mr. Carlton to go with madam to the modiste's this afternoon."

Ritz groaned.

After breakfasting, he rose gingerly and put on a house suit.

"Ritz!" cried Mrs. Carlton as he appeared in the doorway of her sitting room, his neck bandaged, "What on earth . . . ?"

"I'm afraid you'll have to put off the shopping trip," said Ritz, "My neck's worse."

The significance of the bandages and the house suit was unmistakable. Mrs. Carlton made a gesture of annoyance. "I wish you wouldn't be so

## A BIT OF CARELESSNESS

careless, Ritz. I told Mrs. Crillon I wouldn't play cards with her—and Ritza was to meet us at Madame Gouf's and everything."



*There was no doubt about the stiff neck the next morning. . . .*

Ritz was honestly contrite. "But I ought not to go out with this neck."

Mrs. Carlton bit her lip and twisted her fingers together with disappointment. It was rotten luck.

That afternoon two things happened: Ritz called up Park Lane and informed him of the condition of affairs—"No billiards for me to-day, I guess," he said—and Mrs. Carlton and her husband received an invitation to join an opera party in honor of the English Ambassador, who had come up from Washington unexpectedly.

"I'd love to," Mrs. Carlton said over the telephone, choking back tears of vexation, "but I'm afraid we can't. Ritz isn't feeling quite up to things."

Ritza arrived home at tea-time in anything but a good humor. "My Lord!" she said explosively, finding her parents sitting comfortably by the tea-table, "this family makes me tired. I go to a lot of trouble changing my plans to make appointments and then nobody shows up. What goes on, anyway?"

Mr. Carlton sniffed.

A short time afterwards it became evident that he was going to have a cold in his head; and when the fact was realized, the feeling of the injustice of things that pervaded Ritza's and Mrs. Carl-

ton's suites increased in intensity. Mrs. Carlton pointed out that it was already Friday. "*Everybody* has got their clothes by now," she said resentfully, "and I hate Ritz's not going with me. Mr. Biltmore always goes."

"What *I* hate," Ritza said warmly, "is not going up to the Plazas' Adirondack camp."

"What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Carlton, starting apprehensively.

Ritza explained that the three of them were to go. "Nina and I were talking about it just this afternoon. Mr. Plaza has just bought a couple of new lakes and he wants to try the ice on them before the season closes. And this is the last week."

After a moment of horrified silence, Mrs. Carlton began to weep quietly. "It seems to me it's always this way whenever I want to do anything," she sobbed.

Ritza visited the invalid. "Well," she demanded somewhat brusquely, "how do you feel now?"

"I think maybe my neck is not so bad," said

## THE RITZ CARLTONS

Ritz after feeling himself carefully, "but my head is all swollen up. I shouldn't wonder if I had a sinus before I'm through with this thing."

Ritza turned away furiously. "He thinks maybe he's going to have a sinus," she said, flinging herself into a chair in Mrs. Carlton's room, "It makes me so damn mad!"

From then on events followed each other with diabolical rapidity. Through it all, Mr. Carlton blew lustily on his nose while his valet stood nearby with a tray of handkerchiefs. To begin with, Chatham called up to say that he was thinking of taking Miss St. Regis down to his shootery at Mallard, South Carolina, and to ask in a friendly way if the Carltons would care to chaperone. By ill luck Mrs. Carlton instead of Mr. Carlton got the message. Then came a call to the effect that Mr. Blackstone of Chicago had received a wire from his gamekeeper that the time was ripe, the peachicks being all nicely fledged, for the annual peacock drive on the lawn of Blackstone Manor—he hoped the Carltons would join his special train at High Bridge.

As she received these invitations in quick succession, Mrs. Carlton made the little choking noise in her throat that the secretary had come to know so well. Almost at the same moment the valet entered.

"Mr. Carlton thinks he has a sore throat, madam," he announced.

Gently the secretary reached for the bottle of smelling salts as her mistress grasped the edge of the table and swayed towards the bed. Maids entered.

"My God!" said Ritza emotionlessly, with awful sarcasm, "Dad certainly is a wonder."

"There's nothing to do about it, I suppose," said Mrs. Carlton, hopelessly, when at length she had been got to bed, "If we can't go, we can't go."

The complexion of things seemed very dark, and life seemed little else but wretched disappointments. Mrs. Carlton lay quietly, her face turned towards the empty window.

Suddenly a light dawned. A note arrived from Mr. Plaza announcing that he and Mrs. Plaza had



decided not to go to the Adirondacks after all. Instead, they hoped the Carltons would join them on their eighteen-thousand-ton yacht, *The Dimple*, for a short cruise the following weekend.

"That's all right," said Ritza after an instant's calculation, "Pa ought to be well by then; it's ten days off."

Mrs. Carlton raised herself, feeling a new strength running through her limbs. "Where is Mr. Carlton?"

Ritz answered the question by appearing in person in the doorway. He was wearing his dressing gown. "I say!" he exclaimed excitedly, waving something in his hand, "it just occurred to me that I might have some fever with this neck of mine and I took my temperature. I'm almost a hundred and one. So it looks as though I were in for a two weeks' siege."

Mrs. Carlton glanced wildly at him as she would have had he been the Plaza's yacht disappearing over the horizon. Hysteria was not far distant, and the secretary lifted the receiver of the telephone with frantic haste. In ten minutes

the doctor had taken charge. It was dusk when he left the room and closed the door softly behind him. "I think she is through the worst," he said to the secretary, "but do not leave her too much alone. If Mr. Carlton . . ."

"Mr. Carlton is ill, sir."

The doctor raised his eyebrows as if the news had served to illuminate a problem that had mystified him. "Ah!" he said, "May I see him?"


"And now, Mr. Carlton," he said after he had written some prescriptions, "we men do not always understand things. We cannot break down without affecting those dependent on us—causing them unhappiness. A bit of carelessness, a draft, an . . ." he broke off with a shrug, "But if you do as I say, you may be out in four or five days. May I tell Mrs. Carlton that you will do so?"

Ritz tried to speak, but the cold had settled in his larynx. So he nodded.







RS. CARLTON lay propped among pillows getting strength. She spoke casually, holding out her hand to her husband, "Ritz, I wish you would think a little more about when we ought to leave for Southampton." It was true—March was almost past, and in a month or so the better people would be leaving town, and New York would be in a fair way to becoming intolerable.

The week had been a hectic one for Ritz. "I'll try to think, dear," he said, his brow wrinkling with worry, "but I've got a domino tournament on this week at the club which keeps me pretty busy. We're playing nines, you know."

By way of explanation it must be said that the problem of where to go for the summer is a grave one to people of wealth and social prominence. The majority of mankind may take it lightly, but



the rich cannot; from somewhere they must find strength to solve the perplexing question; and they do—*noblesse oblige*.

The Ritz Carltons, of course, faced it squarely. "Listen, father," Ritza said, breaking into the den where he was practicing his dominoes, "I'm sick of Southampton. Why can't we go to California this year?"

"Maybe we can," said Ritz, "but I've got a domino tournament on this week and won't have much time to—"

"That's all right," said Ritza indifferently, "but if you think we can go, for Heaven's sake do something about it. You know how crazy mother is about Long Island."

A few days later Ritz spoke of summer plans to his friend, Park Lane. The domino tournament was over and they were sitting resting in the restatorium. "By the way, Park, where are you going this summer?"

Mr. Lane looked grave. "The truth is, we may go to Europe," he said, "Mrs. Lane feels it's time

## SUMMER PLANS

the children saw the châteaux district. Park, Junior, is almost eight, you know."

"We'd thought of California," said Ritz.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Mr. Lane, "They say it's bully out there."

The subject was formally broached in the family the next day. Ritz had been breaking in some new spats by walking up and down the halls and had happened to wander into Mrs. Carlton's sitting room. He briefly recounted his conversation with Mr. Lane. "Of course, dear," he added, "I know how fond you are of Southampton; but—"

"My Lord!" broke in Ritza, who was standing by the goldfish bowls, "we've been to Southampton for the last three years. I want to go to California."

While they were talking, Mrs. Carlton had risen on her elbow. "I don't know what you mean," she said in a strained voice, "Not go to Southampton? Why, I was going to have the housekeeper go down to Carlton Terrace next week to get the cleaning started."

"Mean!" echoed Ritza, "What do you sup-

pose I mean? I mean that neither Pa nor I want to go to Long Island, that's all."

There was a moment of silence, during which Mrs. Carlton's hand fluttered tremblingly among the smelling-salts bottles by her bed. "All right, dear," she said, "If neither of you wants to go to Long Island, we can go somewhere else."

The reply was so unlooked for that Ritz, who had become absorbed in gazing out of the window, came to himself and turned around; as for Ritza, she stared speechlessly, her mouth falling open with amazement.

"We'll go anywhere you say," continued Mrs. Carlton, her lips parting in a faint smile, "anywhere."

It was a curious scene; and the explanation of it was no less strange. That very morning Mrs. Carlton had awakened in a peculiar state of mind. Lying among her soft pillows, she had considered her many many blessings, and had even turned over in her mind the possibility that she had not always done all she could for others. To what extent her life was already given to sacrifice only



*"I don't know what you mean," said Mrs. Carlton in a strained voice. "Not go to Southampton?"*

those can realize, who, like herself, face the responsibilities of social position day after day—yet she was willing to give even more; though she could be happy only at Southampton, she would give it up.

“Holy Moses!” whispered Ritza in an awed voice when at length she regained the power of speech, “Then we’ll go to California.”

The succeeding week Ritza took charge and spent the days interviewing travel agents, sorting over hotel advertisements, and arranging a thousand details. The condition of the Carlton’s private car, *The Ritzy*, disgusted her.

“It looks like a Pullman.” she declared, “The whole thing has got to be done over. The gold-leaf in my compartment is a sight.”

Mrs. Carlton was unselfishness itself. Nevertheless it was clear that she was suffering. In her husband’s presence she sometimes let fall a word that indicated what was passing in her mind. Once he heard her whisper to herself, “And I was to have been president of the bridge club this year.” Another time, forgetful of the new plans,

she spoke of the kitchen arrangements at Carlton Terrace. "I've been thinking, Ritz, there aren't enough ranges in—" and then stopped suddenly and bit her lip.

But for the most part she went unselfishly about the house, not interrupting, only smiling. Then one day she spoke to Ritz as he was leaving for the club. "Ritz," she said hesitatingly, "Ritz, do *you* want to go to California?"

Ritz, who had recently received a new shipment of canes, was busy trying them out in the vestibule. "I don't know," he said, "It might be jolly. Park Lane is going to Europe, you know."

"But you don't particularly *want* to go West," she persisted, looking slightly wild-eyed.

He did not think he did—particularly. "You never can tell about a place, though," he added hopefully.

She turned and left him without saying anything further. They were supposed to be present at a small dinner and bridge at nine that evening, but at eight o'clock Ritz's valet reported to



him that Mrs. Carlton was unusually tired and felt that she couldn't possibly go out. Ritz was surprised. "Do you suppose there's anything in the house for us to eat?" he asked.

The valet raised his eyebrows dubiously. "There's a couple of freshly cooked wild turkeys, sir."

Ritz good-humoredly made the best of it, and after dinner went upstairs to see his wife. He found her strangely weakened. "Is there anything the matter, dear?" he asked with concern.

"No." she said.

The next morning, however, she was if anything worse; there were signs of growing nervousness; she wept quietly, refusing breakfast and sipping only a little pomegranatade at eleven o'clock. All day long the faint sounds of the coming and going of Ritz's travel agents, trunk salesmen, and private car decorators penetrated fitfully into the suite in spite of all the secretary could do to prevent it. "The soundproof doors *must* be kept closed." she said to the housekeeper.

Of all those who loved Mrs. Carlton, perhaps



only the secretary understood what the woman suffered. Ritza came in hastily about noon to find out from her mother about monogramming the trunks. "I can only say," she declared brutally, "thank God we aren't going to Southampton."

Mrs. Carlton's eyes closed slowly. There followed the clink of smelling-salt bottles as she reached among them; and watching from the doorway, the secretary's lips tightened.

"There will be no need of food upstairs to-day," she told the butler.

Ritz thoughtlessly remained at the club until fairly late. "Well, dear," he said, stopping in for a moment on his way upstairs, "how are you? I don't understand your being ill this way." She moved slightly.

"Park Lane, by the way, sails next week," he continued brightly, "I expect they'll have a fair enough time. But, you know, I'm not crazy about this California trip of ours."

Unselfish to the bitter end, Mrs. Carlton at last allowed a great sigh of relief to escape her at Ritz's

words. The room seemed to lighten, and the secretary tiptoed away to tell the butler that a little nourishment might be needed after all.

As it turned out, the brightening was but momentary. Ritza appeared like a whirlwind. "Everything is fixed!" she vociferated, "We leave for Los Angeles next Friday."

"Ritza," said Mrs. Carlton tensely, raising herself, "of course I want to go where you want to go this year, but do you realize that your father doesn't like California?"

Ritza stared. "You're crazy. I suppose you think he wants to go to Southampton?"

"It is our home." said Mrs. Carlton simply, "We both love it."

"I tell you you're crazy." repeated Ritza.

Mrs. Carlton turned to the secretary. "Please go and ask Mr. Carlton where he would like to go for the summer."

For several minutes there was silence in the room; Ritza lit a cigarette and began polishing her nails, and Mrs. Carlton lay on her pillows breathing heavily. Presently the secretary re-

turned. She was pale as death. "Mr. Carlton says, madam—" she said, pausing, wild-eyed.

"Yes?" said Mrs. Carlton, leaning forward eagerly.

"He says, madam, he would like to go to Europe. He says Mr. Lane—"

A choking cry came from the bed as Mrs. Carlton fell back.

"Call the damn doctor." said Ritza disgustedly. But the secretary had already taken action.

An hour later the door of Mrs. Carlton's room opened and the doctor stepped out into the hall where Ritz was waiting. "Mr. Carlton," he said, "your wife is ill. Unselfish mother that she is, she will not tell me what has hurt her; but I can guess. Mr. Carlton—women must have their home, their nest. They cannot wander as we can wander and be happy."

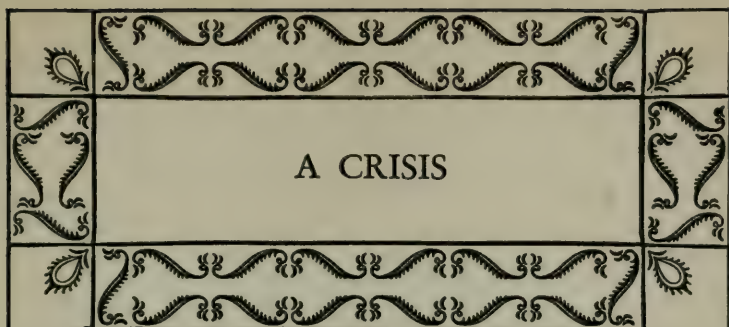
"You mean—?" said Ritz.

The doctor nodded gently. "Yes, Mr. Carlton—Southampton; it is her home. Let her go there this summer."

## THE RITZ CARLTONS


Tears had sprung to Ritz's eyes. "Of course." he said huskily.

Then with a silent pressure of thanks on Ritz's arm, the doctor turned down the hall and tiptoed in to reassure his patient.



A CRISIS



 RITZA CARLTON did not go down to Southampton with her father and mother. She left New York a week earlier than they did and went to Boston to visit Nina Plaza's aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Copley Plaza.

Left alone, Mr. and Mrs. Carlton busied themselves getting things in order at their summer home. "I think I'll put in some more terraces with fountains on them." Ritz said. Mrs. Carlton found the mechanism for heating the dumbwaiters in wretched condition. "And the gazebos are all peeling," she said desperately.

Nevertheless, they were not miserable—although Ritza's letters, which had been frank and open at first, became more and more disquieting. "I wish I knew more what she were doing." Mrs.



Carlton moaned, "Her being away this way makes it awfully hard."

Then one day the blow fell. "Believe it or not," wrote Ritza, "but I've gone and got myself engaged to Parker House. He graduates from Harvard this spring, and we'll probably be married in July."

There was a dreadful silence. "How perfectly awful." said Ritz slowly at last, "It seems to me father used to speak of a Mr. and Mrs. House—a Mr. and Mrs. Parker House. As I remember it, he said they used to go around a lot, but that later they lost their money. This boy must be the grandson."

Mrs. Carlton's lips were white. "Ritz," she whispered, "we must go up there."

They left that afternoon. Time was much too short to think of getting the private car. They crossed by ferry to New London, Mr. and Mrs. Carlton in the Isotta, the secretary following in the Hispano, and the Rolls bringing up the rear with the baggage; and four hours later they were in Boston.

"Ritza!" cried Mrs. Carlton, flinging herself forward when her daughter was ushered into the sitting room at the hotel. "Your letter! How *could* you?"

Then the true gravity of the situation became apparent. "Now, listen here, mother," Ritza said angrily, "no one asked you to come up here. I've got myself engaged to Parker, and it's my business—see? If you don't like it, keep your opinion to yourself."

A cold perspiration broke out on Ritz. After a long interval he coughed.

"You mustn't misunderstand your mother," he said, "Coming so suddenly, it has naturally been a great shock to us. But all we are here for is to see what kind of a chap he is, so to speak." Somewhat mollified, Ritza produced a photograph, which was passed from one to the other in silence. "I'll bring him round to-morrow," she said.

"I suppose you realize, dear," said Mrs. Carlton with an unnatural smile, "that the man you want to marry is not in the *Social Register*."

"No," returned Ritza defiantly, "but he could get in any time he wanted to."

It was an insane statement, and when her daughter had left, Mrs. Carlton gave way to tears. "The child must have lost her mind," she sobbed, looking at Parker's photograph through her tears. "He might be the son of a clergyman from all you can tell from this."

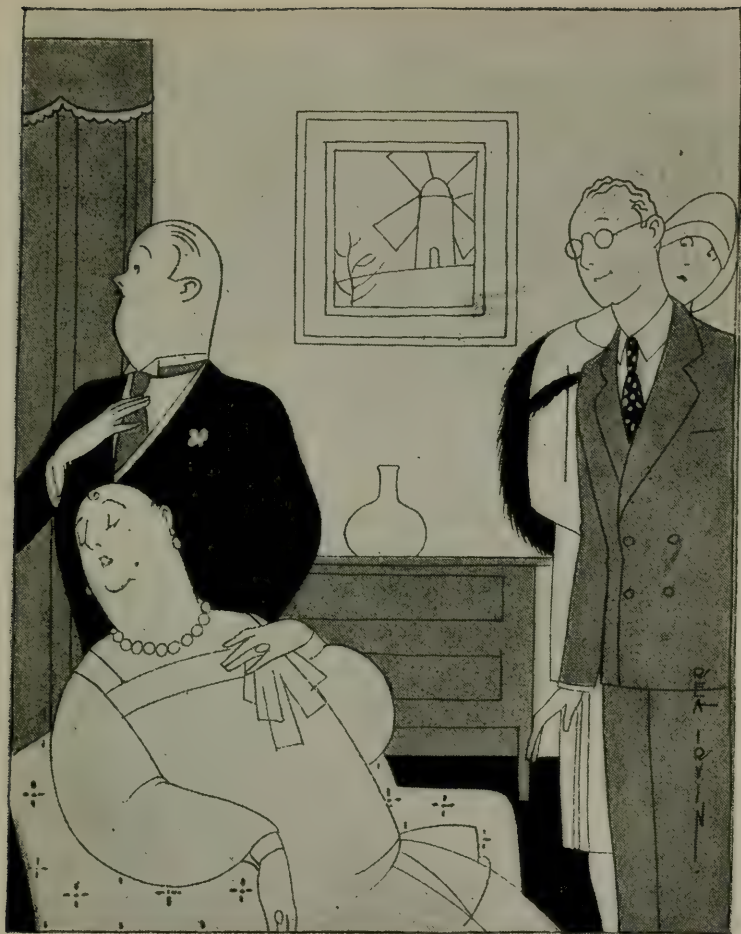
Parker arrived with Ritza the following morning a little before lunch. His first words struck home like a flight of poisoned arrows. "You must come out and visit father at the Manse at Lexington," he said cordially.

Ritz swallowed with difficulty. "Then your father is a clergyman," he said.

"An Episcopalian?" asked Mrs. Carlton, growing white and sinking into a chair.

Parker smiled. "Congregational," he replied.

A throaty sound came from Mrs. Carlton's chair, but she did not break down; there was too much at stake. "You must come to the hotel sometime and play bridge with us," she managed to say, "or dominoes with Mr. Carlton."



*"An Episcopalian?" Mrs. Cariton asked, growing white and sinking into a chair. Parker smiled. "Congregational," he replied.*

"But I'm afraid I don't know how to play either," he said apologetically.

Ritz stared. "What on earth do you do during the day?"

Parker explained that he was pretty busy taking his final examinations. "I like to play chess, though," he said.

"Chess!" exclaimed Mrs. Carlton, laughing in a high key, "I never heard of anybody playing chess."

"And then, of course, I'm on the water most of the time in the summer."

It was the first point in Parker's favor; and Ritz nodded approvingly. "Now *that's* rather jolly. Ritza has always liked the water."

It was the only favorable point that arose, however. When the young people took their departure, Ritz asked Parker if he hadn't forgotten his cane, and was stunned to learn that the young man hadn't brought one with him.

"A damn funny thing," he said to his wife, "his not having a cane with him. But still," he added optimistically, "his liking yachting wasn't



so bad. You know what a good time Ritza always has on the Plazas' yacht."

"No, my dear," said Mrs. Carlton inconsolably, "The son of a Congregational minister! Why, he probably has a little forty-foot power boat. I shall never never forgive the Plazas for letting it happen while Ritza was staying with them. Never!" It was the pronouncement of a broken woman.

The next day Ritza joined her parents at their hotel, unpacked her trunks and assumed a patient but long-suffering expression.

"Ritza, dear," said Mrs. Carlton, "you have made me ill."

Ritza groaned. "I suppose you don't like Parker," she said sourly.

Mrs. Carlton waved her hand. "It is not that, Ritza. I merely want you to realize what it is you are doing. Parker is poor; he plays none of the games that you have always played; the probabilities are he doesn't even know how to swim."

To all appearances, Ritza remained entirely unmoved by these representations, but the Carltons

did not give up hope. Although they had known their daughter to be brusque in manner at times, they had never known her to be disobedient when to run counter to their wishes would have courted real disaster. They knew she was a Carlton.

"The only reason she's engaged to him," said Ritz, "is because Sepia Biltmore and Iñaña Crillon are both engaged."

"Yes," said Mrs. Carlton hopelessly, "but the Biltmore and Crillon weddings come next month, and Ritza may want one too."

Mr. Carlton shrugged his shoulders and sighed. It was a rainy day. "Copley Plaza has offered to put me up at his clubs here," he said, "but I don't suppose I ought to accept if we're going to be mad at them."

The following Saturday was the day when the graduation exercises were to take place in the Harvard Stadium and young House and his fellow classmates were to receive their diplomas. The night before the ceremonies Ritza announced that she wanted to be married at once.

"What's the use of a big wedding?" she asked,



"We'll go off on his boat. I'm sick and tired of all this talk."

"What kind of a boat has he got?" asked Ritz.

For a second she hesitated. "A catboat." she said.

Mrs. Carlton uttered a piercing shriek. "Ritza! You wouldn't bring your mother's gray hairs in sorrow to the grave by marrying a man with a catboat?"

There was silence while the secretary worked over the smelling-salts bottles. When Ritza replied, her tone was a little less sure than it had been. "Just the same," she said, "I'm going to be married."

Mrs. Carlton had given way to tears. "This will be the worst night I ever have passed." she prophesied.

Early in the morning the secretary took the cushions out to the Stadium so that they would be in place when the party arrived. Mrs. Carlton wore a heavy veil and had the curtains of the Isotta drawn down during the ride out to Cambridge. Even Ritza was depressed. But when

they got out into the bright sunlight she cheered up. "There he is!" she cried, pointing to where Parker was sitting in his cap and gown.

"Why isn't he dressed like the rest?" asked Ritz, noticing that the ornament on Parker's gown was of a different color from that of the others.

Ritza didn't know.

The Fates were soon to make it plain. A speech was made, and the new graduates were asked to come forward to receive their diplomas. Parker House was the first in line—and the fateful words, *Summa cum Laude*, came down wind from the dais.

"Good God!" exclaimed Ritz as the truth swept over him. "The fellow's a grind!" On his left, Mrs. Carlton collapsed silently into the arms of the secretary.

Ritza's face, which had suddenly grown pale, became slowly suffused with Carlton blood. She raised her head proudly, bitter tears of anger and humiliation coursing down her cheeks. "The dumbbell!" she muttered.

The family left Boston that afternoon, Mrs.

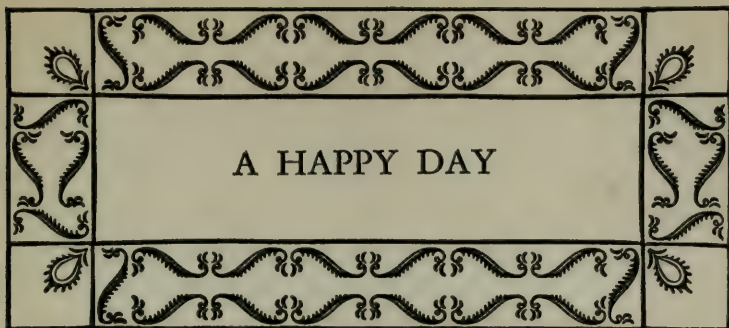
Carlton leading the way in the Isotta (into which a brass bed had been put), Ritz and Ritza following in the Hispano, and the secretary riding with the baggage in the Rolls. A golden sunset lighted them across the New London ferry and through the gates of Carlton Terrace Park, where a little knot of driveway-rakers had gathered after the day's work.

In the doorway of the great house stood a group of footmen, from which a figure sprang swiftly forward as the Isotta drew to a standstill beneath the porte-cochère.

It was the doctor.







A HAPPY DAY





**K**EEPING the clock-golf course on his left, Mr. Ritz Carlton moved slowly towards the upper croquet lawn of Carlton Terrace, where the click of balls and mallets proclaimed a game in progress. It was an ideal day, and the Carltons' Southampton estate fairly glistened.

As he approached the croquet lawn, a pretty picture such as could exist only in a resort of the social world struck his eye. "Ritz, you ass!" said the voice of his daughter, Ritza, "You've played my ball again!"

Strange to say, the words were not addressed to Mr. Carlton but to a tall slender young man who stood leaning in perplexity on his mallet, try-



ing to tell one ball from another. "Ah there, Tower!" said Mr. Carlton. "I see you're mixed up again."

A flicker of intelligence lit the young man's eyes. "I'm afraid I am," he admitted, "The beastly balls are all the same size, you know."

Carlton Terrace had lately been the scene of great activity. The abortive engagement of Ritza to Parker House was a thing of the past, and the Carlton heiress, to the infinite relief of her parents, had turned from the arms of the obscure Bostonian to those of Mr. Ritz Tower, her social equal.

"A splendid fellow." Mr. Carlton wrote to his friend, Park Lane, "My third cousin, you know. Plays billiards, dominoes, bridge, and the rest of it—a brilliant chap. They are to be married in July."

And now the wedding day was close at hand and the wedding presents were pouring in. The trying days of preparation were over. No more than a dreadful memory was that morning when a scream was heard on the third floor and Mrs. Carl-

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ton had fluttered downstairs in the elevator to the breakfast terrace, to moan: "Ritza, I can't bear it! Only five thousand invitations went out! A box of a thousand are still upstairs in the addressing room!" Forgotten was Mr. Carlton's terror as he started up, a first edition of *Dilatory Domiciles* slipping unheeded from his knee.

Through it all, the secretary had proved herself invaluable. It was she who checked the presents as they came in. She thought of everything. "Miss Ritza, madam, will not need more than thirty-two sugar shakers." she said to Mrs. Carlton, "May I mark the other twenty-seven for exchange?"

It was the secretary again who pointed out that two pieces were missing from a supposedly complete set of ninety-six cocktail glasses; it was she who discovered an error of more than two hundred gallons in Mr. Carlton's checking of the amount of champagne available in the cellars for the reception.

Although there was always the danger that Mrs. Carlton's strength would fail, all was serene.

## THE RITZ CARLTONS

The wedding day dawned absolutely cloudless. Early in the morning came a cablegram from Park Lane which struck a very pleasant note.

"Jolly good wishes." he cabled.

Ritz hurried upstairs and showed it to his wife. "This should be a happy day for us." he said.

Mrs. Carlton kissed him. "Have the Bishops arrived, dear?"

Ritz didn't know. "There were some ushers at breakfast, though—about twenty, I should say."

"Twenty!" exclaimed Mrs. Carlton, starting, "Surely there must be more than that."

"There are thirty, madam," said the secretary quietly from the doorway, "and they have all been checked."

Mrs. Carlton sighed happily.

The Bishops arrived a little before lunch and accompanied Ritz out to the lawn to inspect the preparations for the ceremony. A considerable body of men were still at work putting out blooming orange trees.

"Lovely!" said one of the Bishops, sniffing the blossoms, "It is a lovely thought."

## A HAPPY DAY

"The ceremony, of course, will be very simple." Ritz explained. "I am arranging these orange trees in false perspective to make the place look a little larger. It was the groom's idea. You see this stretch of lawn is only a quarter of a mile long."

When Mrs. Carlton began to dress, the maid reported that her mistress's strength had been only slightly impaired by the strains of the morning, and word came from the Ritz Tower establishment that the valets who had charge of dressing the groom were running strictly on schedule.

Such perfection seemed too good to be true. "Has anybody sent any more suits of armor?" Ritz asked, going into the wedding present room.

The secretary glanced rapidly at her cuff. "Two more came in this morning," she said.

In the meanwhile, guests began to arrive. A half-hour before the time set for the ceremony, Tower came over, fully dressed, and had a little talk with his father-in-law. "I hope you will make her happy." Mr. Carlton said.

Tower adjusted one of his spats which had

slipped out of place. "Eh?" he asked in a puzzled way.

"I mean, give her all she wants." Mr. Carlton explained, "She's fond of yachting, you know—and those suits of armor are bully things."

The bridegroom's face cleared. "I see. Of course." he assured him, "Rather!"

The stage being set with the Bishops all in place, Mrs. Carlton having been got into her dress of deep lemon with chrysanthemum embroidery, and the two happy young people being ready to enter into the holy state of matrimony, the secretary gave the signal to the orchestra for the wedding march. Ritza appeared on her father's arm in a ravishing dress of cloth of platinum and a rich veil of *point d'Alençon*. When they reached the altar, her fresh, young voice rang out in the responses.

"Wilt thou take this man to be thy wedded husband?" asked one of the Bishops.

"Yup." she replied.

"Yes. Rather." said Tower when it came his turn to respond.



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Finally the music struck up again in the conventional manner, and Mr. and Mrs. Tower turned about and walked down the aisle amid a general murmur of admiration. "That platinum gown is a charming little thing." Mrs. Crillon was heard to say.

Mrs. Carlton then swept down the pathway, and the assemblage repaired informally to the terraces, where a number of multicolored fireworks were set off, a large balloon was liberated, and refreshments were served.

"My dear Mr. Carlton," panted one of the Misses Waldorf Astoria, coming up to Ritz, "I think your wife is bearing it all wonderfully."

Ritz suddenly realized that in the excitement of the last hour the question of his wife's strength had entirely slipped his mind; and after replying hastily with something about the wedding having been charmingly simple, he hurried away to find her.

"My dear!" he exclaimed aside to her, "how is your strength?"

She smiled at him reassuringly through her

pearls. "Are the people getting their motors all right, dear?" she asked. "I heard they had quite a time getting the Rolls-Royces sorted out."

"They are all in order, madam," said the secretary, who was at hand.

By this time the bridal party had finished eating, the bride and groom had gone upstairs to dress, and wild rice had been distributed among the guests gathered at the main entrance. Mrs. Carlton, as if possessed of supernatural strength, stood with the others by the porte-cochère with Ritza at her side.

That morning, when the rumor had got abroad that the newlyweds were going to go away on board Tower's twelve-masted schooner, *The Wisp*, which was riding at anchor not far out to sea, some good-natured, harmless fun had been planned. A hundred or so yachts had gathered with the intention of accompanying the pair on the first stage of their honeymoon, and some satin ribbon had been tied to the rigging of the schooner.





*"My dear!" he exclaimed aside to her,  
"How is your strength?"*

## THE RITZ CARLTONS

"It will be wretched for them." Mrs. Carlton said unhappily.

But Ritz was in the secret. "Don't worry, dear," he whispered, "They're to go off in a submarine."

There now arose a buzz of excitement; valets and maids came to the door with bags and hat-boxes, and Ritza burst forth, heroically dragging her husband by the arm. Amid a shower of wild rice and some old shoes of Ritz's which he had worn every day for a week at the club, the pair entered their motor and sped away towards the beach.

"Goodbye, Pa!" Ritza yelled.

Ritz waved his arm.

Presently a submarine was seen putting out to sea, gradually sinking out of sight beneath the waves as it approached the waiting yachts.

It was an hour later. The guests had gone, and Mr. and Mrs. Carlton stood together on a terrace. Mrs. Carlton did not seem tired, but the secretary was very nervous. "I beg your pardon," she said

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respectfully to Ritz, "but Mrs. Carlton's strength, sir—"

Just then a figure issued from the orchidery and hurried towards them. Ritz, who had been remarking what a happy day it had been for everybody, turned in time to recognize the doctor.

Then it was that Nature, so long cheated of her rightful dues, asserted herself; and Mrs. Carlton, with a low cry, collapsed, her pearls rattling against the balustrade as the doctor caught her in his capable embrace.

At a signal from the secretary, the electric house-ambulance rolled up, and the party moved indoors.









